

# Hillandale News



No.223, Autumn 1998



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# Hillandale News

The Official Journal of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society Limited  
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**Issue no. 223 - Autumn 1998**

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## EDITOR'S DESK

Before announcing the several changes which have taken place since our last issue, we have sadly to report the death of our patron, Kathleen Darby, an event which is marked by Peter Adamson's obituary, in this issue. She will be greatly missed by those privileged to know her.

We also have to announce the resignation of our Chairman, Dr. Peter Martland, and also the editor of HILLANDALE NEWS, Chris Hamilton. The election of successors is expected to take place at the Company's Annual General Meeting, the date and venue for which are to be announced. In order to continue publishing HILLANDALE NEWS, a Provisional Editorial Group has been formed, comprising our President, Mike Field, Richard Taylor, a leading member of the Society, and Edward Parker, a member who has offered some of his time to assist in producing the

magazine. We feel that the Society owes a debt of gratitude to the resigning officers for the efforts they have made to promote the Society's interests over a number of years.

The handover of editorial responsibility to the Provisional Group is offered in explanation of the unannounced changes in the appearance of the magazine, and in apology for any (hopefully temporary) decline in the quality of its presentation, and any errors or omissions. It is sincerely to be hoped that the production of the magazine can be put onto a firm footing again following the Annual General Meeting. The same should also be said for the re-establishment of our other electronic means of communication, i.e., Fax, E-Mail and the Website, all of which are regrettably, temporarily suspended.

In conclusion, we can only say, "Watch This Space!"

Please note that material intended for inclusion in HILLANDALE NEWS must reach the Editorial Group not less than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**. Hence the deadline for the **Winter 1999 issue** will be the **15th November 1998**. Copyright on all articles in HILLANDALE NEWS remain the property of the authors. Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Group.

# LONDON MEETINGS

Due to continuing reconstruction work at the Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, the current venue booking for the monthly meetings has been extended until June 1999. London meetings will therefore continue until further notice at

**The Wynter Room  
Swedenborg Society  
Swedenborg House  
Bloomsbury Way, London, WC1A 2TH**

The following programmes are arranged for the remainder of 1998:

**October 20<sup>th</sup> - Paul Morris presents:**

**Edison's Gems Live on Edison Phonograph**

**November 17<sup>th</sup> - John Passmore presents:**

**Caruso Sings Verdi**

**December 15<sup>th</sup> - Traditional Members' Night:**

**Members are invited to bring along items on the theme of 'Birds'**

The London Meeting is a lively and well-attended meeting of enthusiasts with a wide range of interests and expertise. Come and join us!

The 1999 programme will continue to be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month, from 7.00 p.m. until 9.30 p.m.

Offers to give a presentation or demonstration to the London Meeting during 1999 would be greatly appreciated. If you are able to give or know someone else who could give a two or one hour presentation to the London Meeting, the London Chairman would be pleased to hear from you. It is your field of expertise and passion that we want to share. Please contact **Howard Martin,**

██████████ **HAYES, Middlesex, UB4 0HU; or phone** ██████████  
██████████ (after 7.00 p.m.).

Howard Martin, London Meeting Chairman

## Dear Kathleen...

– a letter to Kathleen Darby  
(1914-1998) from Peter  
Adamson

It seems no time at all since I first received a charming letter from you, in your stylish handwriting. I had recently been in contact with the writer Michael Wilcox, whose play *78 Revolutions* had been staged at the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh some years earlier: in my slow way, I'd only just got around to sending him a review I'd written for HILLANDALE NEWS, and I now explained my personal interest in early recording history (the play was set in a Gramophone studio in turn-of-the-century Russia). How great was my astonishment to hear that the daughter of Sinkler Darby, who in real life had made the very first Russian discs in St Petersburg in 1899, was alive and well and living in London.

And so we were 'introduced' – first by letter, then by telephone, and at last face to face: we met at your neat and stylish flat near Regent's Park, in a modern building paradoxically named

Nash House while surrounded by real Nash. In fact, style and paradox seemed to be essential qualities in your life: with a father who repeatedly crossed the Atlantic (by boat of course, was it forty-something times?), a successful personal career in design for packaging, an endless love of 'good line and colour' and girlish delight in the unexpected and eccentric. Well I remember discovering on your side-table a pile of egg-boxes, all different, and all *squashed flat* – you had been revelling in the accidental intricacies of design formed in their compressed state. And the tangled, almost knitted, bundle of wire hanging on the wall I recognised as fuse wire... Books and magazines on art and design, on travel and distant cultures, were all around you, and a picture window led straight onto shady greenery hidden from public gaze.

When I first met you, you showed me a box of treasures from your father's recording career: signed photos from famous artists, a few notebooks, and precious diaries from the days of Fred Gaisberg and the famous recording tours. Just think! Your father was only just coming out of his teens when he and Fred first toured, and his



own photos and his diaries showed a very young American travelling abroad and taking adventure as he found it. You even had two original zinc discs from St Petersburg, messages to his family in 1899.

You were quite right to be very careful about how you disposed of those treasures: you had already had some rather less than satisfactory approaches, and you gleefully summed up one of them as 'pompous and overbearing'! Luckily you were well enough pleased with your encounter with the CLPGS to authorise our own Peter Martland's arrangements for the precious material to be stored with due care in the safety

of EMI Music Archives. And soon we were delighted to welcome you as one of our Society's Patrons.

Well, Kathleen, this has been a rather strange letter about our short friendship – and I haven't even mentioned your own loveable demeanour, softly spoken and sweet, yet decided and independent in thought – and ever young at heart.

We shall miss you. May you rest in peace.

With much love from

Peter



# THE PETER DAWSON CYLINDERS

by John S. Dales

Further to the appeal from Peter Burgis regarding the cylinder records of Peter Dawson (HILLDALE NEWS no. 218). I would like to respond as follows:

Peter Dawson's first commercial recordings were cylinders made for the Edison-Bell Consolidated Phonograph Co. Ltd., London, during 1904. It is impossible to determine the exact dates as the Edison-Bell factory ledgers have not survived. Original catalogues, especially for the early years, are scarce, and what remains is widely distributed in private collections and libraries.

The recording activities of Edison-Bell are indeed complex. Therefore to gain an understanding of the manufacturing methods and progression, one needs to examine thoroughly actual records. As a consequence, a brief summary of events prior to 1904 is necessary.

During the 1890s, Edison-Bell were producing duplicated cylinders made of soft brown wax.

These were mechanically copied from original masters and sub-masters. In November 1902, Edison-Bell issued their first moulded cylinders made of celluloid and styled "Indestructible". The wax masters had been recorded a few months earlier and sent to an USA manufacturer located in Chicago. Here they were processed, then returned to London for sale. Manufacture of the brown wax cylinders continued.

By April 1903, Edison-Bell had installed their own plant for moulding celluloid cylinders. Initial sales proved promising, but although having hard-wearing qualities, the cylinders were prone to shrinkage. Attempts to rectify the problem failed and the company phased them out during early 1904. Shortly afterwards, a replacement moulded cylinder, this time in hard dark wax was issued. The earlier type brown wax cylinders continued to be manufactured as a cheaper alternative.



In April 1904, a new manufacturer was registered as the Lambert Co. Ltd. They were in business to provide the record-buying public with a moulded indestructible cylinder and took over this type of record where Edison-Bell had left off. The new Lambert cylinders were also made of celluloid but accommodated a thick cardboard lining to minimise shrinkage and distortion. The Lambert company occupied the same premises as the Edison-Bell recording studios at Euston Buildings, Euston Road, London, NW. Lambert master cylinders were recorded here by, or in association with, Edison-Bell. Master records for both companies, when appropriate, would be taken at the same recording session, with the relevant company identification in the spoken announcement. This accounts for sometimes finding identical titles, and artists, appearing in both companies' catalogues.

All these events are important as they concern the initial output of Peter Dawson's cylinders.

In his autobiography "Fifty Years of Song", Peter Dawson makes reference to his first recording sessions. He was invited to make

a test record, by the general manager, James E. Hough, at the Euston Road studios, the song chosen for him being "Long Ago in Alcala". The recording manager, Russell Hunting, was far from pleased with the result, indicating that Peter's voice was too powerful, causing the wax cutting diaphragm to blast. Despite Hunting's adverse opinion, Peter was invited by James Hough to make a further test record. On the occasion of the second test a different horn and diaphragm were used. The result this time was happily to the satisfaction of Russell Hunting.

Further reading of Peter's autobiography reveals details of his first song "Navajo" and why the name Leonard Dawson was chosen, and I quote ...

*"... I heard them discussing the kind of song I should sing for the first record ... The song finally decided on by Edward Hesse, the musical director, was "Navaho" [sic] ... But before the recording date was fixed, Hunting commenced another fractious argument - "We gotta do one thing. Every Negro in the States is called 'Pete'". Sure enough, my Christian name was changed from Peter to Leonard. But after a few*

weeks, Mr. Hough changed it back. "This young man is making a name for himself in the concert world, and it's bad business on our part not to use his real name".

The following is a list of Peter Dawson's earliest recordings for

both the Edison-Bell and Lambert companies. Some selections were issued by both concerns. This list is not the order in which they were recorded, but is for comparison purposes.

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Accompani- ment</b>	<b>Edison-Bell Catalogue No.</b>	<b>Lambert Catalogue No.</b>
Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes	Piano	-	5087
What's the Use of Being Wise	Piano	-	5088
If Thou Wer't Blind	Piano	-	5089
You'd Better Ask Me	Piano	-	5090
If I Were King	Piano	-	5092
Vulcan's Song	Piano	-	5094
Thy Beaming Eyes	Piano	6383	-
To My First Love	Piano	6384*	5091
Navajo	Orchestra	6398*	5100*
Bluebell	Orchestra	6399*	5099*
Calvary	Piano	6416	-
When the Stars Were Young	Piano	6417	-
Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind	Piano	6418	5093

\*Accredited in contemporary catalogues as Leonard Dawson

The September 1904 Edison-Bell catalogue lists just one title, no. 6384, "To My First Love". This catalogue was most probably in preparation either during, or just after, Peter's initial recording sessions and would account for other titles not being included.

A trade circular issued by John G. Murdoch & Co. Ltd., Farrington Road, London, EC, also dated September 1904 contains over 200 Lambert cylinder titles. This publication must have been hot off the press as all the above Lambert Dawson titles are listed. Although no. 5091 "To My First Love" is accredited to Peter Dawson on this list, it was probably announced as "Leonard Dawson".

Edison-Bell allocated catalogue numbers to their selections during the production process. I have firm evidence that sometimes selections were released out of consecutive step, i.e., a higher number was issued before a lower number - a good example of this being nos. 6383 and 6384. Although no. 6384 appeared in the September 1904 catalogue, no. 6383 did not, and was released a little later on. It is more than likely that no. 6383 "Thy Beaming Eyes" was also

announced as "Leonard Dawson". Never myself having heard a copy of this record to confirm this, hopefully readers can come to the rescue with details.

To add further confusion, those three, possibly four, titles originally accredited as by Leonard Dawson were listed as Peter Dawson in catalogues of a slightly later date. This would be the result of a re-recording having taken place. Often, if sales exceeded the anticipated demand, then the same artist, when possible, would be called upon to make new masters.

Many collectors of Peter Dawson's records have often wondered if "Navajo" was indeed the first record as stated in his autobiography. Confusion has developed by the fact that there are others of his song titles with lower catalogue numbers. My explanation of numbers being released out of sequence has hopefully cleared up this issue. Also, as just three, possibly four, of the titles are accredited as by Leonard Dawson, then "Navajo" has a good chance of being the first. I would like to think Peter Dawson's account of his first recording is correct - after all, he was able to recollect the song



chosen for him during his initial test session.

It is impossible to offer a precise date as to when these first cylinders were recorded. I am of the opinion that the "Leonard"s were recorded during July or early August 1904, and that the "Peter"s were taken during August and possibly September 1904. Of the two catalogues mentioned earlier, the Edison-Bell copy dated September 1904 would have been at the printers during August for issue to dealers by the first of the month. The Lambert cylinders listed in the Murdoch trade circular has a company-headed letter that is dated "September 1904" with no actual day stated, and therefore could have been issued at any time during the month.

I have a copy of Lambert no. 5099 "Bluebell", and a factory sub-master of the same title in wax. The announcer on these records is Russell Hunting. The regular issue cylinder shows a finely written date, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1904, at the end of the cylinder after the playing grooves.

When Edison-Bell first issued moulded cylinders, in 1902, quite often a date, and other details, were added to the cylinder at

some time during the pre-production stage. Although barely discernible, these details can be identified on close examination and continued to appear until early 1905. The Lambert company also included them during their brief existence. These dates can sometimes cause confusion as they are written in the American fashion, as month, day, and year. Possibly the dates were added either by, or under the guidance of, Russell Hunting, who was an American. At one time I had thought that these were recording dates, much in the same way as the early Berliner discs were dated. I now have a different opinion and feel that Edison-Bell dates applied to the first use of a new working mould. The reasons I have reached this conclusion are too manifold to outline in this article.

May I appeal to Peter Burgis, and other collectors, to send me details exactly as written on the ends of the early Dawson cylinders (and indeed any dated Lambert/Edison-Bell cylinders). The information can be forwarded to the Editor who will re-direct to me.

Peter Dawson's early Edison-Bell recordings were deleted around

the middle of 1905. According to researcher Frank Andrews, the Lambert company went into voluntary liquidation during August of the same year. Edison-Bell continued to issue Peter Dawson cylinders steadily over the years until 1914 when they abandoned this type of record. The later issues however, were made from old stock moulds. He also made cylinders for other companies as outlined below.

#### **NATIONAL PHONOGRAPH CO. LTD., London**

During 1905, Peter Dawson recorded his first cylinders for National Phonograph. When, and how, this materialised we do not know. The company had already established a sound reputation for their 'Edison' Gold-Moulded cylinders. Peter's first Edison cylinders were released for sale in December 1905. They proved to be an immediate success and he was to make further records for the company at regular intervals until shortly before they discontinued wax cylinder production in 1912.

In 1908, the Edison companies in America introduced the 'Amberol' cylinder. This finer grooved cylinder, intended for

extended playing time to compete with the 12" discs, had a playing duration of approximately  $4-4\frac{1}{2}$  minutes. The 'Amberol' cylinders were sold in tandem with the original cut cylinders and shortly afterwards were referred to as '2 minute' and '4 minute' to differentiate the types. A British series of the 'Amberol' appeared on the market in April 1909. Peter Dawson was featured in the very first 'Amberol' catalogue and was to make many other titles over the next couple of years.

In 1912, the American side of the business placed a celluloid version of the wax 'Amberol' on the market. Dyed blue, this was the famous 'Blue Amberol' and it quickly displaced the fragile wax cylinders. A British series of the 'Blue Amberol' cylinder soon followed in 1913. Many of the early British 'Blue Amberols' featured Peter Dawson, and they were issued, again at regular intervals, until the London branch of the Edison business ceased production in 1915. It is important to note that none of the Peter Dawson 'Blue Amberol' cylinders issued between 1913 and 1915 were new recordings. All, without exception, were produced from wax 'Amberol'



moulds that had been made between 1909 and 1911.

Certain of the Peter Dawson 'Blue Amberol's are really quite exceptional with regard to recording quality. No. 23164 "I Am a Roamer" (by Mendelssohn) and no. 23333 "Hearts of Oak" (by Garrick & Boyer) will serve to confirm my point - they sound truly wonderful even when played on original equipment.

#### **GENERAL PHONOGRAPH CO. LTD., London**

At the time that Peter Dawson made his first 'Edison' cylinders for National Phonograph in 1905, the managing director was James H. White. Jim White, as he was known to his colleagues, was an American and like Russell Hunting had been involved with the talking machine industry since its earliest days. A one-time recorder himself, he developed a vast experience within all aspects of the trade. He resigned from National Phonograph in June 1906 to become managing director of General Phonograph. Jim White contributed towards the foundation of the new company well before leaving National Phonograph as the first announcement of 'White'

cylinders was in the trade magazines for August 1906.

Although there is no surviving written evidence I feel confident enough to assume that it was Jim White who invited Peter Dawson to make cylinders for the newly formed General Phonograph. Both men would have known each other sufficiently well through their involvement with National Phonograph. The 'White' cylinders were in production for just over a year when the company ceased manufacture in favour of disc records. The cylinders are of the highest quality for their time, and demonstrate the hallmarks of the contemporary Edison product.

Peter Dawson had made his first 'White' cylinders by the time of the initial September 1906 releases. He was without doubt a popular recorder with Jim White and his associates, as from a total output of 256 titles on the 'White' listings Peter was involved with 39 of them.

'White' cylinders do not turn up very frequently nowadays but when they surface, nearly always a Peter Dawson item is amongst them. A particularly fine recording to look out for is no. 199 "Excelsior" (by Longfellow &



Balfe) that Peter sings with the tenor Walter Hyde.

### **RUSSELL HUNTING RECORD CO. LTD., London**

In his autobiography "Fifty Years of Song", Peter Dawson mentions that it was Louis Sterling who persuaded him to record cylinders for this company. Louis Sterling (later Sir Louis) was another American widely regarded as a skilled, and shrewd, businessman. He was to follow a long career within the record industry.

The former Edison-Bell employee, Russell Hunting, together with a man named Percy Smithurst, controlled the manufacturing side of the company in producing 'Sterling' cylinders.

Although Peter had been "persuaded" by Louis Sterling to record 'Sterling' cylinders, only three titles were issued, in 1907. Of these, one was in his own name of Peter Dawson, and the other two as Will Danby.

### **PREMIER MANUFACTURING CO. LTD., London**

This company, producers of the well-known 'Clarion' cylinders, was founded in 1907. Some of the

personnel, and artists, had formerly been in the employ of Edison-Bell and this probably accounts for Peter Dawson's recording sessions with them. The recording engineer was C. R. Johnson, whose career extended back to around 1890, when he was associated with some of the first-ever recordings taken in Britain.

Peter Dawson recorded just three 'Clarion' titles, two of which were issued in January 1908.

### **Cylinder Record Pirates**

From time to time, collectors of cylinders are surprised to find well-known recording artists usually associated with certain manufacturers, appearing on obscure labels. Before recognised copyright laws came into existence, the illegal copying of cylinders in Britain was extensive. Cylinders, in comparison to discs, were relatively easy to duplicate by any individual having access to rudimentary equipment. Blank cylinders were readily available, and basic, inexpensive duplication machines were not too difficult to locate. The record "pirates" would copy popular songs and music of the day from the better quality cylinders, such as Edison and

Edison-Bell. Any identifying spoken announcements were either altered or filtered out altogether. The resulting cylinders were inferior and as there were no artists' fees could be offered for sale at very reduced prices.

One of the more successful "pirate" concerns was the Electro-Mechanical Engineering Works located in London's East End. They put out a cheap cylinder labelled as 'London Popular'. At least two Peter Dawson titles have been found on this label, copied from 1906 'Edison' cylinders.

Electro-Mechanical also made cylinders for other outlets using a variety of labels. One such label for the Australian market was appropriately named 'Colonial Record'. Perhaps Peter Burgis, and other Australian collectors, could advise us if Peter Dawson has been found on this label.

**NICOLE RECORD CO. LTD.,  
London**

I have deliberately left dealing with this company until last as at the time of writing no surviving cylinder catalogues are known. Collectors in Britain will be familiar with the 'Nicole' 7" and 10" discs of brown celluloid on a compressed cardboard foundation. Having been in business since 1903, the company entered the cylinder market in 1905, and the first of their 'Champion' cylinders were released in November. Within a few months the company had ceased trading. Peter Dawson made many discs for Nicole and therefore could have recorded cylinders also. Hopefully, the relevant information will surface one day.

The following is a summary of Peter Dawson's cylinders. The dates shown are issue, or release, dates and are not recording dates. All are of the standard 100tpi 2 minute type unless stated otherwise.

Cylinder	Type	Issued
Edison-Bell	Black wax moulded	September 1904 to February 1914
Edison-Bell 'Popular'	Brown wax	September 1904 to end 1905
Lambert	Black celluloid	September 1904 to ??

Edison	Black wax moulded	December 1905 to May 1911
Edison 'Amberol'	Black wax 200 tpi 4 minutes	April 1909 to January 1913
Edison 'Blue Amberol'	Celluloid 200 tpi 4 minutes	February 1913 to October 1914 (November 1918 in USA)
White	Black wax moulded	September 1906 to October 1907
Sterling	Black wax moulded	March and May 1907
Clarion	Black wax moulded	January 1908 and 1909?
London Popular	Black wax moulded	Pirated c. 1906 ex-Edison 2 minute
Nicole 'Champion'	Black wax moulded	November 1905 to February 1906; but Peter Dawson recordings not known?

To the best of my knowledge, only those early issue Edison-Bell and Lambert cylinders, as listed in the first half of this paper, have piano accompaniment - all others have orchestral accompaniment.

### *Acknowledgements*

*Special thanks to Frank Andrews of London for the many record*

*company histories that he has published in the HILLANDALE NEWS (CLPGS) and "Talking Machine Review" (Ernie Bayly, Bournemouth). These have been a valuable aid towards my own researches.*



# **“RE-INVENTING THE PAST”**

## **Part 1 - THE GILLETT TIN FOIL PHONOGRAPH** **by Colin Armfield**

**A Revised Version of the Talk given at the CLPGS London Meeting at The Swedenborg Society Hall, 16th June 1998**

In 1997, I constructed a tin foil phonograph in accordance with the drawing and instructions in the book “The Phonograph and How to Construct It” by W. Gillett, published in 1892 by E. & F. N. Spon, and re-published by George L. Frow. There follow some notes on what I have been able to discover about W. Gillett, and an account of my construction of the machine.

Information on W. Gillett is scarce. He was not a member or associate of the Institute of Electrical Engineers, as his address, *Faraday Cottage, Herschel Street, Slough*<sup>(1)</sup> might suggest, nor was he a member or associate of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers. However, I have looked at a series of articles he wrote for the “English Mechanic”, 1891, giving drawings and instructions for constructing his own version of an electrically driven wax cylinder

phonograph. Subsequently, Gillett was kept busy answering various queries from readers to one of which he explained that Edison cylinders were not playable on his machine. Possibly this explains the rarity of examples of his wax cylinder machine nowadays. A year later, the book mentioned above was published with the drawings that had earlier appeared in the journal. In addition, there were chapters on the science of sound and Edison’s invention of, and improvements to, the phonograph. Another chapter gives constructional details of a tin foil phonograph of Gillett’s own design.

This is the machine I took to the meeting. I began work on it after I had acquired a lathe. For members with suitable equipment, who might want to make one of these machines, I include a few notes which might be helpful. The drawing in the book is necessarily

rather small, but can be photocopied to full size for working and ordering materials. The factors for magnification are:- horizontal, 231.6%; and vertical, 227.4%. I found the instructions in the book very clear and easy to follow. I did not follow Gillett's method of cutting the threads on the shaft and the cylinder, as I have the advantage of a screw cutting lathe. However, not having a back tool rest, I cut the thread on the cylinder, before mounting it on the shaft, a procedure that, I am afraid, invited much stress when later trying to mount the cylinder concentric with the shaft! For me, a beginner in this class of work, cutting such a fine thread on a 3" diameter cylinder was very fraught, for with every pass - and many were needed - the slightest slip of work or tool would have brought disaster. Cutting the slot in the cylinder - required to fix the foil - called for some virtuoso work with the hacksaw. After the first slip, which fortunately did little visible damage, I mounted the shaft and cylinder in the lathe centres and a short length of hacksaw blade in the tool post. This could then run up and down the lathe bed and cut the slot accurately and in complete safety.

Members who are lucky enough to have milling attachments will not need to resort to this chicanery. I used wood for the two handles on the machine, rather than bone which was specified by Gillett. A nearer alternative would perhaps have been white nylon. Another substitution involved the material for the diaphragm. Gillett specifies *ferrotype plate*. This was a product used in the ferrotype system of photography and consisted of a thin iron plate coated on both sides with a dark enamel type of finish. My substitute for this was to lead to later problems in operating the machine.

When the exciting time came for the first trial I found considerable difficulty in getting audible results. Only those with stentorian voices could get anything back from the foil! I suspected that the diaphragm was to blame, and my choice of the bottom of a baked beans tin was perhaps not best suited to the task. Additionally, considerable amusement was caused to friends who noted that the Best Before date, still visible, had expired! I must say that it had passed the Henry Seymour test of ringing brightly when dropped onto a hard surface. So then I made numerous experiments with



other materials for the diaphragm, which included mica, phosphor bronze, tin plate, copper, tool steel, and in various thicknesses. The most successful proved to be aluminium, with a thickness of approximately nine-thousandths of an inch. For gaskets, I turned up several out of a synthetic rubber sole supplied by a friendly shoe repairer. Another route is to buy some self-adhesive sheet rubber (as supplied for inner tube repairs) from a bicycle shop. This can then be cut to size after sticking to a wooden disc mounted onto the faceplate of the lathe.

Other crucial elements in successful recording and playback are the diameter of the embossing point and the material and thickness of the recording medium - these last two being inter-related. I found the optimum diameter for the embossing point to be about 0.020". If smaller, there is a tendency to tear the foil; if made larger, much of the energy from the diaphragm is lost in indenting the foil. The point has to be hardened and tempered, polished and burnished with the greatest care. I used aluminium foil, as supplied for baking, the thickest I have been able to obtain being about 0.0006"<sup>(2)</sup>. I have

found it advantageous to polish the foil with 'Pledge' or a similar polish containing silicone. Because the microphone cell is considerably forward of the pivot point for the arm carrying it, the stylus point does not move directly to and away from the groove in the cylinder but has also a left and right component to its motion. This makes adjustment of the point rather difficult. The point should of course, be exactly opposite the bottom of a groove and lightly embossing the foil. I have found it necessary to use a watchmakers' eyeglass (x 6 magnification) to make the final adjustments.

In recording direct into the cell, the lips should almost touch the cell and a considerably forceful enunciation is called for. Gillett says that in reproduction, the sounds from his machine were audible in a large room. I have found it very helpful to use a recording horn with a narrow taper, and a standard reproducing horn (e.g., the Edison Fireside Horn) to make the recorded sound audible to a number of persons. An adaptor is necessary to convert the standard 15mm bore to the 7mm used in the Gillett designed microphone cell.



Once all these adjustments have been made, one can, with skill, care and luck, record and reproduce speech and various sounds in an audible and amusing fashion. As Gillett remarks in chapter 2 of his book, "... the person listening to the reproduction of words must have been previously acquainted with the record to fully understand them ..." For us, perhaps, the problem is that we can only listen with 1998, CD-educated ears, otherwise we too, like our Victorian predecessors, would be amazed at the miracle performed, and be looking for the ventriloquist under the table!

To carry the machine about is somewhat inconvenient until it is housed in a small box. This should incorporate a device whereby the flywheel can be housed separately from the machine, otherwise should the machine or box be accidentally be dropped with the flywheel in place then a bent shaft would certainly result. I will be glad to send a drawing of a suitable box

to anyone interested in making one.

### Notes

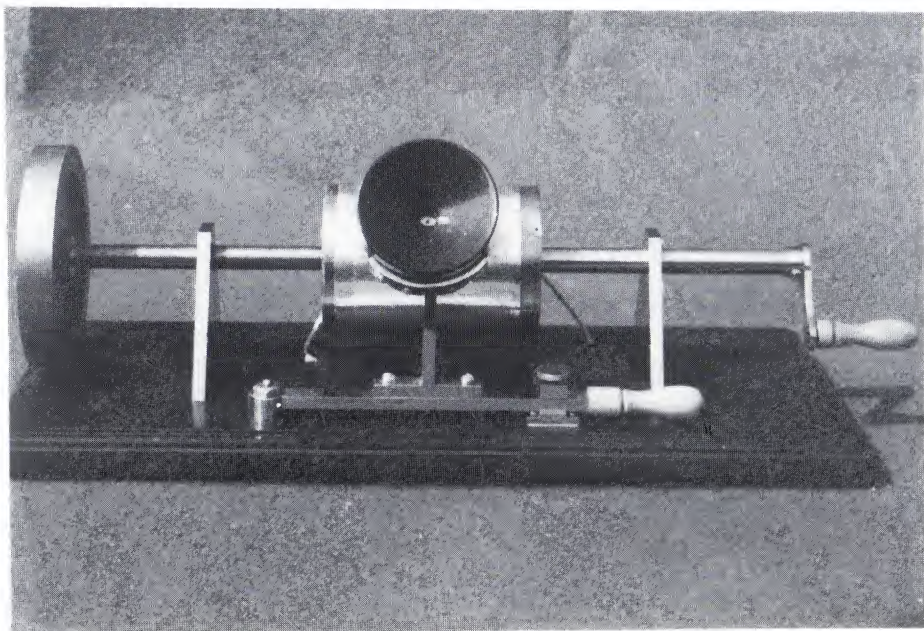
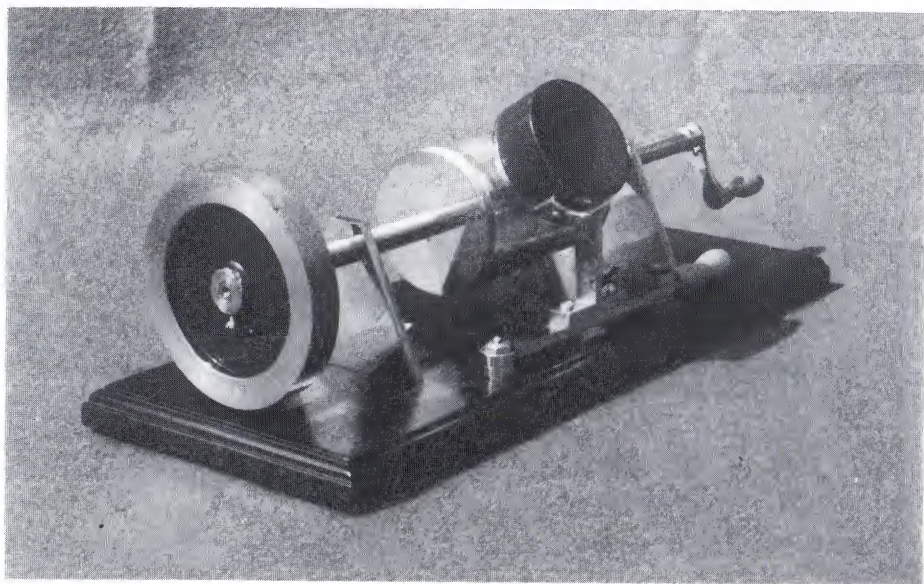
(1) *Herschel Street (after the astronomer Sir William Herschel, who lived in Slough) was then, as now, a mixture of commercial and residential properties, the residents being retired persons or artisans. Gillett does not appear in the 1891 Census, although in the exchange columns of the English Mechanic, he invited a reader to write to him at this address. He is recorded in the rate books for 1895 as renting a house and premises from a Mr. Warrell.*

(2) *Keith Badman may be able to supply tin-foil of a suitable type.*

### Acknowledgements

*I am very grateful to the undermentioned for help: the Library of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers for allowing me to consult The English Mechanic; the Reference Library at Slough Central Library, for access to Census returns, street directories and Ordnance Survey maps; the curator of Slough Museum for finding Gillett in the index to the Rate Books for 1895; to the Secretary of the Leopold Institute, Slough, for access to their early records; and finally, to George Frow, whose remark at the 1997 Northampton Phonofair prompted the general title for this piece.*

Two views of Colin Armfield's Tin Foil Phonograph.





# WE ALSO HAVE OUR OWN RECORDS - Part 8

by Frank Andrews

CAMEO is the first label under the letter 'C' in this continuing series of "We Also Have Our Own Records". The stockists were G. Gilbert & Co., manufacturers of gramophones, who had been in the talking machine business as early as 1905. From two premises situated at 75/77 Arundel Street, Sheffield, Yorkshire, and 21 Chapel Lane, Hull, Yorkshire, Gilbert & Co. announced the availability of the "new" Cameo records at 1 shilling each, in December 1916.



Cameo was the UK-registered trade mark belonging to the Columbia Graphophone Company of New York and London, the word having been submitted for

registration in May 1915, and registered since November 1915. The Cameo discs were nothing more nor less than Columbia-Rena Records which had been deleted or transferred into Regal records for the introduction of that label in February 1914, and then a number of those Regals suffering deletion in July 1916.

The Cameo labels were printed gold on a purple backing and were affixed over the Regal or Columbia-Rena record labels. Over 150 selections were available with the first batch of Cameos numbered C.1 to C.75 plus. The original titles were retained on Cameos, but no artists were given. In lieu, a classification of the item recorded was printed, such as, Tenor Song, Vocal Duet, Comedian Song, etc. By the time that Gilbert & Co. had nearly 200 selections on offer in October 1917, the status of the Columbia Graphophone Company had been changed to a private joint-stock British business, incorporated as the Columbia Graphophone Company Ltd., and the Cameo's trade mark registration had passed from the



American company to the new British company.

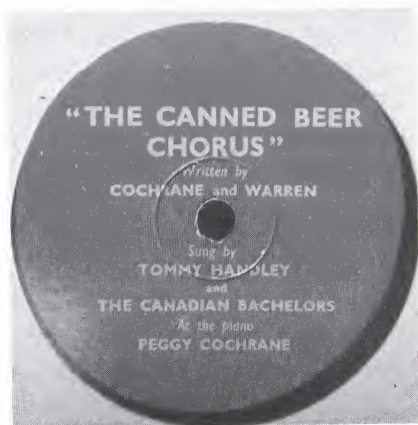
G. Gilbert & Co. - proprietors a Mr. Hibbard and his son, Mr. C. Gilbert Hibbard - had increased the price of Cameos to 1s. 3d. in April 1917, and continued with the 'label over' deleted Regal and Columbia-Rena records. The catalogue numbering reached C.100. Does anyone have any beyond that number?

Another prefix was used for Cameos which was the letter Z. At one time I thought that the Z series were a continuation of the C series as all discs in my incomplete listing were in the Z.100 block, but someone sent me details of Z.1, so does anyone know of Cameos numbered Z.2 to Z.120 inclusive? This Z series appears to be confined to Regal records which were deleted from the catalogues in August 1918 and March 1921. It could be that the Z series was not handled by C. Gilbert & Co., for the last advertisement I have found by Gilbert was printed in January 1918, before the Z series labels would have been printed. Why was the prefix changed? Other deletions from the Regal and Columbia-Rena Records were allocated to the Phoenix label

belonging to the Columbia Graphophone Company, and they were Phoenix discs with 'NB' prefixed numbers, not matrix numbers. Over 1588 such sides were issued, and like the Cameo discs, the artists' names were not printed on the labels which were stuck over Columbia's deleted stocks. Member Arthur Badrock and myself request the catalogue numbers of Cameos and Phoenix discs from discs held by members. We will write back if you have discs for which we want details. One Cameo has been notified as having its labels stuck over Phoenix ones.

CALYPSOTIME - a label that is a latecomer to my labels listing, and as such should be the first of the 'C's, rather than Cameo. The stockists, Messrs. Thompson, Diamond and Butcher, included Calypsotimes among their labels stocked in January 1955. There was a CR.500 catalogue series, the highest known to me being CR.510. Labels were yellow with black printing and carried the British type of warning about copying and broadcasting around the edge of the label. More information about this label would be appreciated.

**THE CANNED BEER CHORUS -**  
 Other than what is printed on the label, which is red printed on yellow, I know nothing at all. It must be an advertising song for somebody's beer, but whose? The song was written by Peggy Cochrane and "Warren", whom I imagine was C. Dennier Warren, the actor/singer who played "Bones" in the BBC's Kentucky Minstrel Show, broadcast on radio. Tommy Handley, the comedian, sings the song along with The Canadian Bachelors, with Peggy Cochrane at the pianoforte. There is no label name nor any numbers printed on the label. I should imagine it was a label for a ten-inch disc. Can any member give further details?



**CARLTON RECORDING INSTITUTE, LTD.** I have heard of only one disc which came from this Institute, which had its address at Carlton House, in Lower Regent Street, London. That was a red and gold labelled 12" diameter disc with recordings of the uncrowned King Edward VIII's broadcast speech from Windsor Castle on the eve of his departure from England - his abdication speech of 11<sup>th</sup> December 1936.

Other than the distributing company mentioned on the label, the disc had no name. In the area above the spindle hole was a silhouette, in gold, of the King, with "E" and "R" associated. On each label was printed "KS 1-2", which was also marked in the area surrounding the labels. The letter "L" was also in that area. I

would suggest that the KS referred to King's Speech. There was never a recording of the speech put out in Britain direct from the domestic broadcast by the BBC. Brunswick records were issued in the American and Japanese market, but they were recorded from the overseas broadcast of the speech by the BBC, and, as a consequence, reception from the short-wave signal was self-evidently of variable quality. I believe the Carlton Recording Institute's disc also suffers from less than perfect reception of the broadcast when the recording was taken, and is almost certain to have been pressed from a Brunswick master, or have been dubbed from the 10" Brunswick, for a correspondent of mine tells me he has both the 12" Carlton and the 10" Brunswick and that they are the same recording.

**CARNIVAL 1930 RECORD** - The proprietor of such labelled discs, of which only one double-sided example is known to me, was the Victoria Hospital, Swindon, Wiltshire. Both sides had been recorded and pressed by the Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd, the disc being a fund-raiser and a souvenir of the Carnival Week held in Swindon from June 8<sup>th</sup> to

14th, 1930. The artist was the country yokel singer, Billy Richardson, who recorded "Soft as Oi Looks" and "Wot's the Price of Swedes?" sung and spoken in a West of England dialect. Both sides were later issued on the Columbia company's Regal label in October 1930 as MR.153. The accompanying pianist was Arthur Ford, un-named on the labels.

**CASTLE RECORDS** - I know of these discs only through a list of records published in the "Music Trades Review" of April 1939. They were all of Pipe-Major Reid's Band, the record numbers being from 2387 to 2392. These were the same numbers and the same band as were issued on Beltona records contemporaneously, so perhaps Pipe-Major Reid (or some other interested party in Scotland) had his band's recordings pressed with his own private label?

**CASTOPHONE MANUFACTURING CO. LTD.** was a concern which undertook private recordings. I am not aware that it had any catalogue of recordings. Lacquer-type surface records were made for the company's clients. One such, issued with a brick red and gold label, was the Colchester Gang Show. "Trailer needles



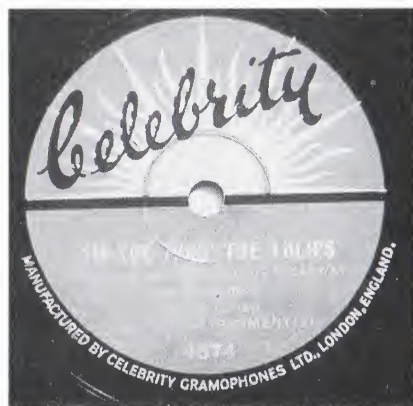
advisable" was printed to the right of the spindle hole.

**CELEBRITY** - These discs had their label name printed in longhand in black across a golden half sun with rays emanating. The rest of the printing was in gold on a sky-blue background except for the outside edge of the label which was a dark blue. With a catalogue series in a 4000 block the 10" diameter discs were the property of Celebrity Gramophones Ltd., the second company to bear the name, and founded in June 1928. The first company had been situated in Bermondsey Street, London, SE1, and the new company also established itself there, although its first registered office had been in New Broad Street, London, EC.

Celebrity discs were "stencilled" records, i.e., they were pressed from masters in the Chaul End, Luton, Bedfordshire factory, where Dominion Records were produced by Dominion Gramophone Records Ltd.

I know of no Celebrity record below no. 4300, so that may be the number at which the Celebrity company began its catalogue numbering. Full details of any Celebrity records held by

members would be welcome. The earliest mention I have found of this company's discs new to the market is dated March 1930, when the numbering was already in the 4300 range. The company may not have had a very extensive catalogue, knowing that the Dominion catalogue itself only reached about 380 discs, and that the Dominion business was petitioned into compulsory liquidation just four months after March 1930. How much, if any, business was done in Celebrity records whilst the Dominion business was in the hands of its Receiver, I am unable to say.



Celebrity Gramophones Ltd itself went into voluntary liquidation in March 1931. When Celebrity's Receiver declared a dividend for

its creditors, it was set at only three-farthings in the £. As a consequence. Dominion's Receiver was only paid £176-11s., which left an unpaid debt of £56,946, if my mathematics is correct.

**THE CHAPPELL RECORD and THE CHAPPELL DE LUXE RECORD** - These were the 10" and 12" diameter discs respectively, of the proprietors, Chappell & Co. Ltd, publishers of copyrighted musical scores, based at 50 New Bond Street, London, W. Ballad Concerts were another area of business promoted by the company. They introduced their own labelled records in March 1914, with music recorded from their own musical scores. International agreement in the field of copyrighting, had regulations that although publishing houses could have their scores recorded and sold on discs of their own proprietorship, they would have no right in exclusivity - all recording companies were to have equal access. The recordings for Chappell & Co. were undertaken by the Sound Recording Co. Ltd., of Swallow Street, Piccadilly, London, and were pressed by the Crystalate Manufacturing Co.

Ltd. in its factories near Tonbridge, Kent.



Now it would appear that Chappell & Co. did have some protection over its published scores, for there was an action in law against the London branch of America's Columbia Graphophone Company alleging that Columbia - having acquired

some Chappell music scores - had re-orchestrated them for recording purposes, which indicates that scores could be recorded by others provided no unlicensed arrangements were employed. Whatever was the strength of Chappell's complaint, it was strong enough for a Court to order Columbia to deliver up all scores and the recorded work complained of. The case, on appeal from Columbia, went to the House of Lords, England's highest court of appeal. This matter was reported in July 1914, the very month which saw the last of the new issues of The Chappell Records. The Great War broke out the next month.

In total, only nineteen different couplings were issued in the 10" size, and only two of the 12", The Chappell De Luxe Records. The labels on both sizes were black, printed gold. The smaller size sold at 2s. 6d. each, and the 12", with prefixed "A" catalogue numbers were priced at 5s. each. Additions to the catalogue were in course of preparation, it was announced in July 1914. Whether there were any later issues, I cannot say, but I do know that at some stage, Chappells entered into an arrangement with other record manufacturers to withdraw

from making records with their own copyrighted material upon them. Whether or not this was influenced by the unknown result of Columbia's appeal to the House of Lords, I do not know.

All the extant stocks of pressed records were bought up by Hughes & Co. of 86 Mitcham Road, Tooting, London, SW, and were offered to buyers at only 9d. each. Matrices remained in the pressing factory in Kent, and some were later used on the post-World War I Imperial or Imperial Record issues, and probably on Popular Records earlier. The matrices were numbered within The Sound Recording Company's ranges used for its own Grammavox and Popular labels.

Mr. Arthur Wood had been the conductor for Chappell's recordings. A special and important feature of the Chappell discs was the printed leaflet giving the words sung on the vocal record which did carry an exclusive copyright. The leaflets were included with the discs when they were sold off by Hughes & Co.

**THE CHAPPELL PIANO CO. LTD.** had its own records. They were labelled as Brunswick Clifophone, or alternatively, as



Brunswick-Cliftophone Ltd. Both were discs pressed in England from masters sent over from America by the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company, and they came in both the 10" and 12" sizes. In America, they were simply labelled Brunswick Record, but in Britain, they also took the name Cliftophone on the labels, simply because The Chappell Piano Co. had both the concessions for the American discs and for the Cliftophone machines of Cliftophone Ltd., a gramophone developed by W. E. Clifton, a pioneer talking machine inventor and a recording expert. A feature of the Cliftophone machines was the downward-facing soundbox, also to be found on Brunswick gramophones at a later date.



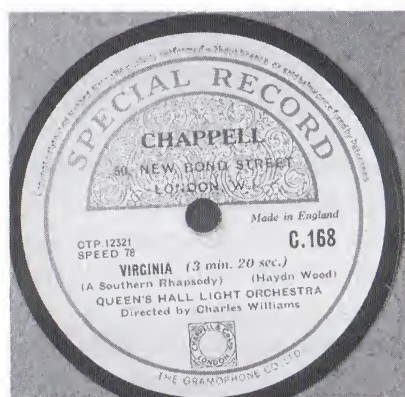
The records were first offered as Brunswick Cliftophones in November 1923. As Brunswick-Cliftophone Ltd, this latter appearing in the bottom halves of the labels, they made their appearance, I guess, in late 1924. During 1924, W. E. Clifton had manned the Chappell Piano Co.'s recording booth at the Empire Exhibition held at Wembley Park during the summer. HILLANDALE NEWS no. 122 gives a fuller history of these labels.

The company British Brunswick Ltd. was formed in September 1926, and discs were simply labelled Brunswick, with the shield-type label. The Chappell Co. Ltd., at first continued as the sole concessionaires for Brunswicks, but as the label now belonged to a regular talking machine company based in Britain, those discs fall outside my terms of reference for this series.

CHAPPELL, CHAPPELL  
RECORDED MUSIC, and  
CHAPPELL SPECIAL - Two world  
wars were to be suffered before  
Chappell & Co. Ltd., still at 50  
New Bond Street, London, W.1,  
and still in music score  
publishing, was again to enter the  
disc record market. Whereas the

discs of 1914 had been sold primarily to enhance the sale of its music scores, this second post-war entry was in order to provide various categories of music for use by various sections of the entertainment industry, and the discs, labelled as in this paragraph heading, usually carried the running time of the piece, or pieces, which had been recorded.

My unchecked information is that at first, the new Chappell discs were single-face records with the cataloguing put into a C.100 series, the C prefixed numbers progressing when the double-sided record format was brought in, the C numbers being common to both sides. Chappell & Co. Ltd. went to a number of manufacturers for these "sound



library" discs. I do not know when they made their appearance, but C.401 was out by November 1951, and the double-faced discs received a mention the next month. Those, I think, were the first to carry the Chappell Recorded Music labels. EMI Studios Ltd., The Decca Record Co. Ltd., Levy's Sound Studios Ltd., and The Gramophone Co.



Ltd. all made recordings for this label. I know of Mercury recordings issued on this label as well. One Chappell label has been noticed which stated "Unfilled Vinyl - Keep in Bag" and that had "CTP"-prefixed matrices, a known EMI prefixed series. New issues averaged 35-55 per year. The Chappell Recorded Music discs had attained no. C.1025 during 1969, by which time the ordinary 78 rpm commercial discs were a thing of the past by nearly a decade.

**THE CHERUBINI SOCIETY RECORDS** - Mario Luigi Carlo Zenobio Salvatore Cherubini, a well-known composer, had been born in Florence in 1760, and died in Paris in 1842. For over 40 years in France, he had been associated with the Paris Conservatoire, during the greater of which time he had been its Director. A contrapuntalist and a composer of operas and church music, he was held in high esteem by both Mendelssohn and Beethoven.

The Cherubini Society was formed in England by a Mr. M. G. Thomas, of 58 Westbourne Park Road, London, W.2. An appointed President was Dr.

William Mengelberg, the celebrated conductor of the



Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam. Soon after the Society was founded in order to counteract the neglect of the composer's music both at concerts and on recordings, a short series of 12" recordings were taken and made available to members of the Society. The discs were numbered CS.1 to CS.8 and became available in late 1949. The recordings on CS.4 to CS.8, which were of the composer's Mass in C, had been recorded in Portsmouth Cathedral, Hampshire, on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1949. Priced at £2 17s. 6d., the five-disc set was available from the Neglected Masterpieces Recording Co. Ltd., 362 City Road, London. EC1.



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*Full details in catalogue, available on request*

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Symposium Records has been invited to dispose by auction of a considerable collection of 78RPM records, together with some LPs, cylinders, books and apparatus. The closing date for bids will be December 31st 1998 and a catalogue is now available.

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I have yet to see an example of the discs so I have no inkling who carried out the pressing. The discs were given white labels printed in both mid-blue and red typescripts. A head-and-shoulders portrait of Cherubini adorned the upper halves of the labels.

**THE CHILDREN'S SPECIAL SERVICE MISSION** - These 10" discs were recorded and manufactured by The Parlophone Co. Ltd. on behalf of the Mission, which was at no. 5, Wigmore Street, London, W.1. at the time that the recordings were undertaken. The Mission was already in existence in 1879 when it was then in Mark Lane, in the City of London. In 1883, it moved to Paternoster Row, near St. Paul's Cathedral, and four years later was to move to Warwick Lane in the same vicinity. The move to Wigmore Street came in 1925. Among its activities, the Mission sold books of a religious nature.

It was on October 5<sup>th</sup> 1932 that four sides were recorded by The Parlophone Company, then under the control of the recently formed Electric & Musical Industries Ltd. The recordings were all sung in English by Jacques Hopkins and his Maranatha Choir, and they



were catalogued into Parlophone "Overseas" or "Export" series, with catalogue no. prefixes of PO for 10" discs and PXO for 12" discs. The Mission's discs were numbered PO.33 and PO.34. They were not deleted until December 1956, thus being available for 24 years. The white labels, printed in blue, bore the Mission's monogram at the top of the label.

**CHRISTIAN RADIO AND TELEVISION COMMISSION RECORDS** - I have yet to discover when this Commission was founded and where its headquarters were. The recording and manufacturing of the two discs seen have been judged to have been the products of Levy's Sound Studios Ltd. of London, with pressing facilities at its works at Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire. ME 112/10

and ME 119/10 were the numbers on the discs and I assume that the '10' refers to the 10" size of the discs, leading one to suspect that some discs were of 12" size and would carry '12' after their catalogue numbers. The matrix numbers had CRTC prefixes, being the initials of the Commission itself. The labels were royal blue in colour with gold printing, although the label name was white on gold ribbon, and "London", large, in white, at the bottom of the label, was placed across the foot of a large blue and white crucifix, depicted in narrow blue and white stripes.

More definite data concerning this label would be most welcome.

**CHURCH OF ST. CHRISTOPHER**, Round Green, Luton. The name of the church has to be taken as the name of the label, which was on a two-part recording of the Rt. Rev. Bishop of Luton, talking about "What it Means to be a Bishop's Church Builder". Matrix numbers CP. 323 and CP. 324 were the only numbers on the disc, which was almost certainly a product of the Crystalate Gramophone Record Manufacturing Co. Ltd., of Hadlow, Golden Green, Tonbridge, Kent. The CP-prefixed matrices employed for private

contract recordings, was carried on by The Decca Record Co. Ltd. when it acquired the Crystalate records business in 1936, but this particular disc's numbers were too low to be a Decca product. The cerise and black label is reminiscent of the Crystalate works labels on test pressings before World War I. The disc was probably conceived as a fund raiser for the church.

**CINECORD** 10" discs were made for the Cinecord Co. Ltd., which was at 49 Whitfield Street, London, W.1, as soon as it was formed in August 1935. The recordings on the discs were already a part of the British Homophone Co. Ltd.'s Sterno or Solex catalogues, or were intended to be so, or they were especially recorded for the Cinecord Company. The Sterno records had their last supplement in September 1935.

Cinecord and Kinecord had been submitted for registration as trade marks by British Homophone in August 1934, but no use had been made of the Cinecord mark until the Cinecord Company was formed one year later. The trade mark received its registration in November 1935, by which time all twenty of the known Cinecord



discs, with their magenta and gold labels had been issued. Cinecord records produced by the British Homophone Company at its Barry Road, Stonebridge Park, London, NW10 factory were not intended for sale to the public. The labels carried no warning prohibiting the public performance of the discs, which was a requirement for records selling to the public from May 1934, when a licence from the



newly formed Phonographic Performances Ltd. had to be obtained if one wished to do so. Also missing from the labels was the registered trade mark as that was granted after the discs had been pressed, but music publishers' royalty stamps were affixed to the value of  $3\frac{1}{4}$ d each side, indicated a retail price of 2s. 6d. (12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>p).

Another feature of the labels was the lack of artists' credits, thereby emphasising the fact that the discs had not been produced for sale to a record-buying public, but that their usefulness was to provide entertainment reproduced over public address playback equipment. In fact, it is almost certain that the cinemas in the Odeon Circuit were the purchasers of the discs. Cinecord no. 1 was prefixed OD, which either stood for the word Odeon itself, or perhaps was a use made of Oscar Deutsch's initials, being the founder of the Odeon chain of cinemas. Not only that, but a foxtrot on one of the sides was "Round the Corner", known at that time as the Odeon Cinema Song.

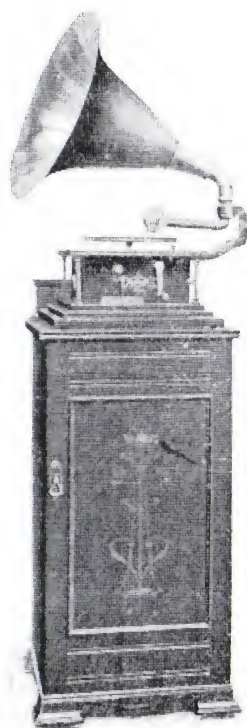
The next three discs, numbered 02, 03 and 04 (the OD prefix was not used again) were all of recordings of theatre organs in various Odeon cinemas. The British Homophone Company's matrix series at this time was "5", prefixed in its Kilburn High Road, London, NW studios, as used on its Sterno records, but the six sides with the organ recordings had SR prefixes, which would indicate that the studio had accepted the organists' performances via the medium of

the General Post Office's land lines. The organs recorded were those housed in the Odeon cinemas in Wealdstone, Middlesex, at Haverstock Hill, Hampstead, London, NW3, at Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, and at Worthing, Sussex. The recordings would clearly have been most useful for playing in cinemas which had no theatre organ. On the other Cinecords, the unnamed artists included the Charlie Kunz Casani Club Band, Sidney Lipton & his Band, Billy Merrin & his Commanders, and Oscar Rabin & his Band, among others.

The Carlton Cinema in Tottenham Court Road, London, W1 is another cinema which could have made use of the records, seeing that one of the directors of the Cinecord Co. Ltd. - Jack Lessor - was also a director of Carlton Entertainments Ltd, soon became a director of The British Homophone Co. Ltd., and went on to become a director of The Crystalate Gramophone Record Manufacturing Co. Ltd., when it acquired a part of British Homophone's business in commercial records and most of the existing matrix stock.

By the time the Cinecord trade mark received its registration in November 1935, Cinecord Ltd. had gone from its address at 49 Whitfield Street, London, W1, and one can no longer find that company with an address in London after that.

*to be continued ...*



EMPIRE MODEL No. 1.  
CABINET No. 1.

# MACHINE COLLECTING

by Richard E. Taylor

I do not suppose that many, or any Phonograph and Gramophone collectors set out with a blank shelf and think to themselves "I am going to collect Machines". It comes to us in many ways - the chance find, in Grandad's loft, or in a junk shop, of a long-forgotten item. But its condition generally leaves a lot to be desired. One dreams of finding the original cardboard box, the original packing, holding the mint condition machine! It can happen.

However collecting starts, it usually creeps up from the first item to four or five before one knows or thinks too much about it. How often I have heard "I would just like one Phonograph and one Gramophone". But which?

I have been collecting now for about 25 years. Over the past 10 I have been trading in Phonographic paraphernalia - not at all easy when you are basically a collector. And I still ask myself, what is the aim of my collecting? I now keep what I like, not for any particular aesthetic or historic reason, usually for the rarity or an item, or its condition. The point of all this is that I think that collectors should take stock from time to time, not only of what they have, but also of

what they are about. If you are in a position to have more than one empty room or mansion and the funds to fill them, then power to your arm! Most are not in that enviable position and must cut our cloth to the best garb. The lucky find of a choice item could be all that one needs. Surround it with a few appropriate accessories - what more could one ask? A nice room for a few of the classic machines to be able to demonstrate to friends and acquaintances - bliss! The full range of HMV 101s or 102s - great! Each to their own - whatever you prefer - go ahead, enjoy!

Some people say to me that it is too late, and now too expensive to start collecting - not so. It is still possible to find even the most rare items. One has just to look. The pages of HILLANDALE NEWS are open for you to ask for advice. But there are many pitfalls for the beginner, so may I give some advice.

The main auction houses are a good place to start. Go along, look, and listen. Don't be in too much of a hurry to buy. Items in auction are often as found, possibly damaged, or with parts missing. If in doubt, ask - the auctioneer will give you good advice. Provincial auction houses are



not always as knowledgeable as the specialists and may not be able to help. Go to a reputable dealer, and see what he has to offer. Ask about items - they will give as much assistance as they can. If you go to general dealers, they will know little more than you. Beware the machine without a winding handle - it probably has a broken motor. Beware the Crap-o-phone, the made-up machine, "last week in Bombay", complete with HMV logo!

Remember, whatever you decide, take your time. As dealers, we may not like the customer who cannot make up his mind, but if you make it clear that you are serious about collecting, most will bear with you. You will look for a very long time to find only perfect machines. Many on the market have had to be restored. The good dealer will tell you what has been done. It will be up to you to see how good the workmanship is.

I have not yet mentioned the cost of machines - it is the most difficult area. Current auction prices give the best pointer, but can be very misleading. If an item turns up in a sale, and two collectors have been looking for it for some time, then they may push the price well over what might be expected. Alternatively, what may appear to be a good, sound item can go for what seems a bargain price. You must always remember that if parts are missing, or repairs needed it will cost, even if you can fix it yourself. If you buy from the trade,

get it clear what you are paying for. Some items are sold as seen, and there is no come-back on the trader - it is up to you. The dealer has to make a profit, or he will not be there the next time you need him. Dare I commit myself to prices - let's try to give a broad picture. It is possible to buy a working portable Gramophone for £50; a working Phonograph for £250; an original Horn Gramophone for £350; or you could buy a nice handwind Berliner for £15,000. They have all been out there in the past year.

I hope this has been of help. Finally, *pour encourager les autres*, elsewhere in the magazine [front cover - Ed.] is a photograph of a Thorens "Crown" horn Gramophone from 1910. It is in as good a condition as one could ever expect to find for its age. I found it at an antiques fair last year.

Happy collecting!



## Book Reviews

### **Societa' Italiana di Fonotipia - Milano**

**Reproduction Italian record catalogue, 1907**

**In Italian, 92 pages, 12.5" x 7.5"**

**Reproduced in two colours on acid-free paper**

**Published by Symposium Records**

**Available from: 36 Paul's Lane, Overstrand, CROMER, Norfolk,  
NR27 0PF**

**Fax & Telephone: 01263-579715**

**Price: £12 (+ p & p)**

The recordings made by the Societa' Italiana di Fonotipia before the First World War are the stuff of legends. Fonotipia were and continue to be regarded by collectors as a bespoke record company, with a roster of artists that was truly stellar. And here they all are in this remarkable early publication, complete with often signed photographs, descriptions of their careers (in Italian), and listings of their records. What riches this catalogue contains. To begin with there are the singers such as Pasquale Amato, Maria Barrientos, Alessandro Bonci, Giuseppe de Luca, Victor Maurel, Jean de Reske, Riccardo Stracciari, Ernest van Dyck and

Giovanni Zenatello - and that is just a sample. In addition, there are instrumentalists like Jan Kubelik and Jacques Thibald. They all vie for space with Italian poets and comics. Inevitably, the largest single group represented is, of course, the mandatory brass band; in this case, the Band of the Italian Marines, with a list of records that would have graced any catalogue of the time. The list of artists and their records has several mouthwatering titles; many have become legendary for their beauty, tone and rarity.

It was an odd company, established as a joint venture by the Italian music publisher Ricordi, and the banker Baron

d'Erlanger, who financed the business. At a time when mechanical copyright on records and recorded works was beginning to appear across Europe, its main function was to create a monopoly for itself of all titles published by Ricordi; at this time they published and controlled the copyrights of the greatest Italian composers, such as Verdi and Puccini. Initially, Fonotipia had a degree of success. In 1909, for example, it obtained injunctions against The Gramophone Company (Italy) Ltd. At the time, Fred Gaisberg was working in Italy. He wrote to London that it had been necessary to remove his recording machine from the company's offices for fear of it being sequestered. In the end Fonotipia won the day, and to avoid massive fines and back-copyright fees, The Gramophone Company (Italy) Ltd was liquidated and their business placed in the hands of Italian agents.

Fonotipia's business manager in these early years was Alfred Michaelis, who had been the founding manager of The Gramophone Company (Italy) Ltd. It is uncertain, but he may have been a relative of Emile Berliner, the gramophone's

inventor. In 1904, after a string of successes behind him, including the famous Caruso recordings, Michaelis was dismissed for a range of irregularities. He got his revenge, leading the legal attack against his old firm, and obtaining the finest classical record list then extant in Europe. As a footnote, after the fall of France in 1940, Michaelis formed a part of the continental flotsam and jetsam washed ashore in Britain. Then an elderly and frail man in his eighties, he tried and failed to get back to his native America. Without money, he turned for help to Alfred Clark, then Chairman of EMI. Clark had been founding manager of The Gramophone Company's French branch and a close colleague, during Michaelis' time with The Gramophone Company (Italy). Despite past differences, Clark personally paid for Michaelis to be cared for in a nursing home, till his death in 1943.

However, I digress - and I hope you agree Fonotipia is a fascinating subject and well worth a digression. The contents of this catalogue are finely reproduced from negatives originally generated by the Stuart-Liff collection and Ernie Bayly (someone we have much to thank



for). The photographs and the listing adds up to a bill of fare that few, if any collectors could ever hope to acquire otherwise. The biographies, written in Italian, add significantly to the value of the work, forming an account of some of Europe's finest

performers, before the First Great War crippled or destroyed their careers. I commend it to every record collector. It will make a worthy addition to your collection and bring you hours of pleasure and interest.

**Peter Martland**

## **The Orchestra on Record - 1896-1926**

**An Encyclopaedia of Orchestral Recordings made by the Acoustical Process**

**by Claude Graveley Arnold**

**published by Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut**

This is really a history of the acoustic age of orchestral recording with a content of detail that is almost staggering and overwhelming, but sometimes confusing. The enormous quantity of orchestral music documented in this book is covered in great detail and all recorded before the electrical process arrived in 1925. The 30-year period covers almost as many recordings as those which followed. Here we have music from the "standard" classical repertoire and a certain amount of light music is included as are offerings from a number of "light" orchestras of the 1920s. Space has made it necessary to limit or omit altogether orchestral recordings of vocal material from

operettas and musical comedies as well as recordings of wind bands except in one or two cases.

The work takes the form of an alphabet of composers with lists of compositions recorded by various orchestras. There are dates of recording, issue dates, matrices and "takes" when known. Only issued recordings are included except for a scattering of performances on LP or CD as "archival" material. Footnotes on every page call attention to dates of additional issues, misattributions, modern issues, and similar marginalia. Dates pertinent to the recording careers of conductors are found under their names in the Index sections at the end of the book.

The compiler has brought together a volume which extensively covers the whole aspect of acoustical orchestral recordings over a thirty-year period. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that this book of 694 pages is a work of immense and scrupulously detailed research, full of fascinating data. The listing of so many English recordings which I, for one, never knew existed will both surprise

and heighten the reader's interest immeasurably.

Among the many discographical books which are available at the present time, this Encyclopaedia should be on the shelves of all main public libraries. I commend you to seek it out, or if you have sufficient funds, buy a copy (\$125-00). Your interest and pleasure will be well rewarded.

**Michael Smith**

#### **Announcement**

### **CLOSURE OF THE EDISON SITE AT WEST ORANGE, NEW JERSEY**

The following information has been received from our Patron, George Frow:

In a recent visit to Edison's Laboratory at West Orange, the American first lady, Hillary Clinton, announced a \$5 million donation towards a thorough restoration of this historic site. The gift is from The General Electric Company, Edison's corporate heir, and it is hoped that GEC's generosity will attract outside contributions.

The National Park Service hopes to raise at least \$30 million to renovate the buildings, laboratories, and Edison's home 'Glenmont' nearby at Llewellyn Park, and preservationists hope to match this sum for an endowment to maintain this early industrial research laboratory as a museum and educational centre.

The undertaking is reckoned to begin in September 1998 and the site is expected to be closed for two years.

**George L. Frow**

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## London Meeting, 19th May 1998

On the 19th May, at the Swedenborg Centre in Bloomsbury, the London members spent a thoroughly entertaining evening in the hands of Howard Hope presenting his "Curious and Curiouser" programme.

Howard, in his inimitable style and ably assisted by a superb EMG gramophone, took the members through some of the more twisted by-ways of the record industry. From the fascinating, but straightforward 7" Berliner of Queen Victoria's private Chaplain, Canon Barker, reciting the Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm, to a bizarre record issued by HMV instructing listeners how to use a telephone; via a recording detailing the delights of preparing a meal using a Radiation cooker. Howard also gave his own spoof story of "Rippen the God" and displayed an HMV record with a back-to-front trade mark of "Nipper the Dog", which was thought to be a South African issue. George Formby advertised his latest film "Keep

Fit" on Regal, and a self-hypnosis record on how to give up smoking by Henry Blythe recorded at 33 and a third, was displayed with the instruction leaflet.

Interleaved with the speech items, Howard played a number of musical records ranging from a Parlophone recording of a musical clock playing chimes thought to be composed by Haydn and issued to commemorate his bicentenary, through to Teddy Powell and his Orchestra on Bluebird, playing "Serenade to the Maid" which seemed to consist mostly of blowing raspberries to her.

The evening wound up with a splendid recording of Edgar Wallace reading his own story "Man in a Ditch" on Columbia, and the hilarious recording by Stan Freberg of "St. George and the Dragonet". The entertainment was finally closed with Harry Roy's recording of "She Had to Go and Lose it at the Astor".

At the close of the meeting, the members showed their appreciation to Howard in the



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usual manner for a most entertaining and enjoyable evening.

## **A London Correspondent**

### **London Meeting, 16th June 1998**

Despite a strike by London Underground drivers, some 15 London members braved the transport difficulties to enjoy a "Collectors' Choice" at the Swedenborg Institute, Bloomsbury, on 16th June.

Colin Armfield took to the stage first with a presentation on "Re-inventing the Past" - how he constructed a working tin-foil phonograph by using the instructions contained in W. Gillett's book of 1892, "The Phonograph and How to Construct It". Before demonstrating the machine, Colin gave an account of his search for more information on W. Gillett, who lived in Slough, and was writing articles for the "English Mechanic" at around the end of the last century. Apart from his address and the fact that he was a ratepayer in 1895, little has been discovered so far.

Colin then detailed his own acquisition of a suitable lathe after retirement, and the actual construction, based on W. Gillett's 1892 design, of a fully working tin-foil phonograph. The beautifully constructed machine was then demonstrated, with speech, song and sound effects using ordinary commercial tin-foil and the results played back through a variety of horns. The machine recorded perfectly and the astonishing clarity of the reproduction led to spontaneous rounds of applause from the members. Colin was heartily congratulated on his remarkable engineering achievement.

Barry Raynaud presented his programme next, entitled "45 Years of 45 r.p.m. Records", this being, as far as Barry could remember, the first time 45 r.p.m. records had been presented at a Society meeting. Barry explained that the 45 r.p.m. record was introduced into the UK during 1952/53, about 2 years later than in the US or Europe, and is not 7" in diameter but actually 6" and seven-eighths of an inch. The

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first record played was "I'll Build a Stairway to Heaven" by Pat O'Day on a 1959 Pye International record, followed by "Walk On By" by Dionne Warwick, from 1964, also on Pye International. In between the musical items, Barry gave the members the benefit of his deep knowledge and understanding of the technical side of the record industry and production techniques. Barry closed his presentation with the well-known recording of "The Floral Dance" by the Brighthouse & Rastrick Band from 1976 on Transatlantic, and ended with a private recording made in 1975 of "Somebody Stole My Girl" with unknown session artists. Barry was thanked by the members for a most informative and unusual presentation.

Frank Andrews followed with his programme of songs of "Cowboys of the Wild West". Frank gave a brief outline of the cowboys' place in the history of the American West, and opened his musical selection with the the nostalgic ballad from the 1930s, "Home, Home on the Range", recalling

the early days of cow-punching. Moving on to life on the trail, Burl Ives sang "The Chisholm Trail", and a barbershop quartet called "The Flatfoot Four" - so named because they were all policemen - told a potential cowboy to "Ride, Tenderfoot, Ride", on a Columbia recording of 1939, a tenderfoot being a person learning to ride a horse. Frank's presentation contained four more records, including "Strawberry Roan" by Fred Douglas, and "Autumn Round-up" by Will Carter - a most enjoyable presentation given in Frank's inimitable style.

To round off the evening, Tony Dutton, on his maiden presentation, gave extracts from some unique records in his collection, being either private or test recordings which were not issued commercially. The first recording was made in 1914 and featured the baritone Dinh Gilly - who was born in Algeria in 1877 but took French nationality - and the soprano Ema Destinova or Destinn in what is thought to be a Czech folk song. The

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second record was of a J. E. Hough test pressing of Stanley Kirkby singing "The Bells of St. Mary's", dating from about 1912. Finally, Tony played an extract from a private recording of a piece by Sir George Henschel, titled "La Clare [*sic - Ed.*] de Lune", which was discovered in a junk shop. It is thought that Sir George himself played the accompaniment, with his sister Harriet singing. The disc itself measured just less than 11" with two sets of test grooves near the outer edge, one of which contains a single piano chord.

All in all, there were four excellent presentations in which there was something for everybody, and the members clearly showed their appreciation.

## A London Correspondent

### London Meeting, 21st July 1998

There was something of the "Edwardian Musical Evening" about the London meeting at

Swedenborg House, Bloomsbury Way, WC1, on 21st July, when Allan Palmer gave his talk entitled "Ballads by Women". The music was superb, and a welcome guest was the Australian mezzo-contralto Sylvia Clarke, who has performed many of the ballads included in the night's selection.

Twenty-eight recordings were heard in full, and these dated between 1906 and 1949. Some eight of the artistes were women, but the point of Allan's programme was that all 28 were compositions by women. Lady Scott, of "Annie Laurie" fame, who lived between 1810 and 1900, was the earliest composer we heard, but what became apparent was the extent to which the others featured had been more or less contemporaries. Studying and working approximately between the 1870s and the 1920s, they shared or attained similar social backgrounds, and had often received classical musical training, as was evidenced by some strong compositional styles. As a generalisation, it may be said that these ballads became the



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folk songs of, and for, an industrialised middle and upper class, and that women abounded in that field at that time by reason of the limited opportunities elsewhere in society. However, that "more than meets the eye" of that period may be seen by the notorious Old Bailey trial in 1935 following the murder of Alma Rattenbury's husband.

The following gives an idea as to the dates, education and the social attainment of some of the composers. *Maude Valerie White* studied at the Royal Academy of Music in 1876, and became the first woman to win the Mendelssohn Scholarship in 1879. The composers *Frances Allitsen* and *Florence Aylward* had both studied at the Guildhall School of Music. French composer *Guy d'Hardelot* studied at the Paris Conservatoire, travelled in the USA in 1896, and later settled in London to popular musical acclaim. *Amy Woodforde-Finden*, born in 1860 at Valparaiso, Chile, was a pupil of Adolph Schoesser and Amy Horrocks, and became famous for her "Indian

Love Lyrics". *Carrie Jacobs-Bond*, of Wisconsin, USA, was a pupil of Bischoff, and sold millions of sheet music copies of "I Love You Truly" (about 1901) and "A Perfect Day", and was entertained by US President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House. *Liza Lehmann*, having studied composition in Rome and Wiesbaden, sang at concerts from the middle 1890s until the turn of the century, became popular in England for the song cycle, and taught at the Guildhall School of Music in 1913. Added here, but simply as a footnote to a tragedy, *Alma Rattenbury* committed suicide in 1935.

Just some of the artists and titles heard this evening were - tenor John McCormack's "Annie Laurie", composed by Lady Scott, recorded by His Master's Voice in 1910; Marion Beezley's "Sink, Red Sun", by Theresa Del Riego, recorded by His Master's Voice in 1912; bass-baritone Peter Dawson's "Wait", composed by Guy d'Hardelot, on Zonophone from 1917; Ada Neville's "By the Old Gate", by Dorothy Forster, on the Ludgate label from c.1920; tenor Walter Widdop's "A Request", by Amy Woodford-Finden, on His Master's Voice from 1926; tenor Frank Titterton's "Dark Haired Marie", by Alma Rattenbury, on Decca in 1932;

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Paul Robeson's "A Perfect Day", by Carrie Jacobs-Bond, on His Master's Voice from 1939;  
Ezio Pinza's "Into the Night", by Clara Edwards, recorded by Victor in 1945;  
and Frank Harvey's "The Devout Lover", by Maude Valerie White, on His Master's Voice from 1949.

At the end of the meeting, Allan was thanked by members for his entertaining programme, as was his son, Stephen, who had recorded the material onto the mini-disc format, mostly from 78s, and who played those recordings on the night.

**John Bridger**

## **London Meeting, Neasden, 18th August 1998**

### Birthday Presents, September 1920-1936

This most entertaining talk was an insight into Frank Andrews' early years, and events within the record industry. The "Presents" used in the title were records issued in each of the 16 years, which were examined in detail with

the usual Frank Andrews' research and commentary. The slides of record labels shown were almost all photographed with the original sleeves. It was quite hard to believe that so much had happened in each of the 16 years, with new labels appearing and some established ones being withdrawn.

In 1920, June saw the last list from Bulldog Records; Jack Levy of Shoreditch introduced Olympic Records, derived from "Ye Popular", and pressed at the Crystalate Works, near Tonbridge, Kent.

Amongst the events in 1921 were the death of George Formby, Snr., and the introduction by J. E. Hough of the 5 and three-eighths inch diameter The Bell disc.

In 1922, both Tower and Ye Popular records ceased; Pemberton Billings announced his constant linear speed World Records, to be ready in October.

In May 1923, the first edition of "The Gramophone", a review-style magazine (still in

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production) was printed; September saw the first records from Parlophone Co. Ltd, a subsidiary of the Trans-Oceanic Trading Company of Holland.

Highlights of 1924 included the introduction of Ludgate Records, Grafton High Grade Records, and the famous Queen's Dolls' House record. Also in evidence was strong advertising for the Linguaphone Company and its foreign language courses.

The death of J. E. Hough, and Charlie Chaplin conducting on Brunswick, were overshadowed in 1925 by the issue in Britain of Columbia's electrical recordings made in the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, of the 850 voices of the Associated Glee Clubs of America.

1926, and most small records were being pressed at 6" diameter. J. E. Hough Ltd was renamed Edison Bell Ltd.

Two new labels were seen in August 1927 - Broadcast Record on 8" diameter, and Unison, made for the

Co-operative Wholesale Society. October saw the Cliftophone Co. Ltd, taken over by British Brunswick, and The Bell Record ceased.

At the British Industries Fair, 1928, the Duophone & Unbreakable Record Co. Ltd. spread a carpet of discs on the floor. Dominion, Metropole, and 8" Radio were all newcomers.

By February 1929, the Duophone/Brunswick factory had been sold, but in July, Decca Records were leasing the factory.

Into 1930, The Goodson Record was offered to the public, and the Durium Record was first seen. The Solex record made its debut at 1/3 [*about 6p. - Ed.*]. Phonycords and Filmophone also appeared.

In 1931, the Vocalion Gramophone Co. Ltd. launched its Super Twelve Broadcast Record, but the main event that year was of course, the formation of E.M.I.

In March 1932, the Vocalion Gramophone Co. Ltd. sold out



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to Crystalate Gramophone Manufacturing Co. Ltd.

In 1933, a Receiver was appointed on April 16th to take control of The Edison Bell Ltd; British Homophone introduced the 8" Plaza disc, and Piccadilly Records failed after May. 1933 also saw the first Trusound Pictorial records, pressings by Decca of black-labelled Winner records, together with the announced release of Rex Records by the Crystalate Co.

By then, time had come for Frank to close his talk, just three years short of his target!

The "Presents" Frank gave us were these -

Last Waltz: Weber; Winner 3440  
Smiling Through: Walter Glyn; HMV B1250  
Queen of the Earth: Kenneth Walters; Regal G 7823  
When I Was a Lad: Frederick Ranalow; HMV D727  
Valse Bluette: Fredric Fradkin; Brunswick 2593 A  
John Peel: Associated Glee Clubs; Columbia 9048  
Voi che sapete: Elisabeth Schumann; HMV DB 946  
Flag of Freedom: International Staff Band of the Salvation Army; Regal G 8892  
Roamin' in the Gloamin': Harry Lauder; Zonophone GO 80

Garden of Allah: Peter Dawson; HMV C1689  
To Meet the King: Sybil Thordyke & Co; Columbia DX 82  
Fun of the Fair: Mammoth Fair Organ; Regal 367  
Pity Me: Tzigane Orchestra; 4 inch 1 No OO  
Twankydllo: Stuart Robertson; HMV.

**Tom Little**

## **Midlands Group, 16th May 1998**

For the first time in years, your reporter, along with many of the regular attenders of our bi-monthly meetings, were prevented from reaching our meeting venue - Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham. A massive police presence in Birmingham City Centre was providing a security blanket for the members of the "G8" Conference, and for a separate political demonstration adjacent to the Carrs Lane Centre, which in fact got out of hand. Consequently, a mere 8 members managed to attend, mostly by parking their cars some distance from the venue.

The two speakers for the evening did manage to be present, and Chairman Eddie

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Dunn gave a programme entitled "From La Scala to the Met." He played a dozen records of some of the famous vocal artists of the period from 1911 to 1945, and informed the audience of the opera houses from which these artists made their respective debuts (and when).

For example, Conchita Supervia sang the "Habanera" from "Carmen" - she made her debut at Buenos Aires Opera House in 1911. Renato Zanelli sang "Si, fui soldato" from "Andre Chenier". He made his debut as a baritone at the Santiago Theatre in Chile in 1916, and a further debut as a tenor at San Carlo in Naples in 1924!

The second speaker was local member, Ed Parker, who reviewed music events of 50 years ago, i.e., 1948, by 78 and LP, whilst reminding his audience of events in the wider world, such as the London Olympics, and the foundation of the British National Health Service. Ed's musical choice ranged from Pee Wee Hunt (Twelfth Street Rag, of course!) to examples of his

own area of interest, modern jazz. Four of the records played were of bands and artists on the Capitol label, the American Capitol company having at this time a very impressive list of artists on their books.

1948 saw the American Federation of Musicians put one of the nails in the coffin of the Big Band Era, when they imposed a second recording ban at the end of 1947, which lasted almost 12 months. The loss of revenue from recordings brought about the decline of many of the expensive large orchestras, but led to the rise of small groups and of individual artists.

In the USA, the modern jazz style known as "bebop" was developed by black musicians who wished to recapture the initiative in the furtherance of what they regarded as *their* music from its commercial exploitation by mainly white bands in the Swing Era. In Britain, white professional musicians took up the modern style, and some of the first bebop records over here were made by the All Star Sextet in early 1948. Ed played the

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sextet's version of "Confirmation" - a Charlie Parker theme.

Among other events relevant to the world of music in 1948 were the invention of the transistor at Bell Laboratories, and the issuing of the first micro-groove LP by American Columbia. However, the Managing Director of EMI could see no future for the LP!

Both speakers had put much research into their programmes - it was most regrettable that they had such small audiences.

**Geoff Howl**

## **Northern Group, 17th May 1998**

Our CLPGS Northern Group met at Alston Hall, near Preston on this date, the topic for the afternoon being "Music from the Movies". Members brought their own choice of movie records, to be played on a choice of gramophones - all HMV - a 102, 104A, and a 127, together with a video machine. As usual, a very wide

scope was illustrated in the choice of records presented, and included Joseph Schmidt singing "My Song Goes Round the World". A video was used to illustrate the artistry of Richard Tauber, with excerpts from the film on the life of "Schubert".

Following this, George Formby's "Mr. Wu's a Window Cleaner Now"; "The Voice of the Stars" (including Shirley Temple); "Waiting for the Robert E. Lee" - Al Jolson; Laurence Olivier - from the film "Henry V"; Judy Garland - "Somewhere Over the Rainbow"; "Dream of Olwen" from the film "While You Live"; "This Old Man" by Dr. Barnardo's Children; The Yodelling Song from "Snow White" (this was popular as three members brought copies); "Carolina in the Morning" - Al Jolson; "Que Sera Sera" - Doris Day; "Great Balls of Fire" - Jerry Lee Lewis; "Beneath the Lights of Home" from the film "Nice Girl" - Harry Roy Band; Gracie's Request record - and many more. One notable absence from this list is "The Harry Lime Theme" from the film "The Third Man", which must be included in everybody's collection - but nobody brought one!

**Ann Mallinson**



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## **Northern Group, 12th July 1998**

For the second year, our intended Portable Picnic was severely affected by heavy rain. Instead of using the beautiful walled garden at Alston Hall, we had to fall back on one of the large rooms in Alston Hall - and although a very enjoyable occasion was held and many portable gramophones were displayed and demonstrated, it was certainly not a Picnic!

The machines on display included -

JHO  
HMV 99  
PIXIE GRIPPA  
HMV 102  
DECCA JUNIOR  
ODEON 9102 (1949)  
COLUMBIA 112  
COLUMBIA 201  
MIKI PHONE  
GUINI PHONE  
DECCA (1947)  
PAL  
COLUMBIA 100

- with several of these being duplicated. Where this occurred, it was interesting to note similarities and differences between them - for example, one Columbia 201 had a Garrard motor and Columbia fittings, but another "201" had HMV table, brake

and fittings, showing how the merging of HMV and Columbia affected the machines during the early 1930s.

Christopher Proudfoot was a welcome guest and gave our members plenty of interesting information on the background details of their machines.

A picnic tea brought this unusual event to a close.

**Ann Mallinson**

## **Joint Meeting, Midlands and Northern Groups, 7th June 1998**

Members of the Northern and Midlands Groups met at Compton Grange, in Wolverhampton, for their third annual joint meeting. The speakers for the afternoon were Phil Bennett (Midlands Group) and Gordon Bitting (Northern Group).

Classic Jazz Clarinet was presented by Phil Bennett, who shared 15 of his favourite records with us. These included six titles by Johnny

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Dodds from the mid-1920s.

Other artists included -

Ted Lewis Jazz Band - Blues my  
Naughty Sweetie Gives to Me, from  
October 1919

Jimmy Noone - Every Evening, and A  
Monday Date - 1928

Jimmy Dorsey - Tiger Rag, from July  
1930

Boyd Senter - Clarinet Tickle, from  
January 1927

Sidney Bechet - Blackstick, from 1938

Omer Simeon - Shreveport, from 1926

Voltaire "Volly" de Faut - Wolverine  
Blues.

This was the usual  
well-prepared and researched  
programme we have come to  
expect from Phil and was very  
enjoyable.

Gordon Bitting of the Northern  
Group followed, with his  
"Singers Past and Present".

Gordon chose -

Alice Delysia - Agfar Dardanella

Enrico Caruso - The Lost Chord

Elisabeth Schumann - Nightingale Song

Lale Anderson - Lilli Marlene

Norman Long - My Little Austin Seven

Tito Gobbi - A Vucchella

Giuseppe de Stefano - Sicilian Folk  
Song.

A mystery voice, singing  
Passing By, was named -  
correctly - by one of the  
audience as Alvar Liddell, on  
account of the clarity of the  
singer's diction!

This was a very "different"  
lecture - the performers were  
wonderful to hear, and Gordon  
was his usual jovial self,  
presenting his programme in  
his own intimate way, which  
was very well received.  
Thanks were given to both  
speakers by Geoff Howl.  
The warm welcome and  
hospitality received in  
Wolverhampton will ensure  
that these Joint meetings will  
continue for many years.

**Ann Mallinson**

## Electrical Cylinder Player

Dear Sir,

I saw on p.155 of the October 1994 (no.200) issue of "Hillandale News", an electrical cylinder player.

Is there anyone who could supply (or tell me where to purchase) such a machine, similar to the one shown on the photograph? It must enable me to play any type of cylinder (speeds from 0-235 r.p.m.).

I hope to hear from someone who could help.

Very sincerely,

Armand Mangin,  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] OSTEND.  
BELGIUM

## Record Speeds

Dear Sir,

Answering Martyn's Dowell's letter (Hillandale News, no.222) about record speeds, I advise to write to -

Diapason Turntables  
81 Mineral Street  
READING, MA 1867  
USA,

who will gladly send all information needed. The "Diapason Archive Turntable"

will certainly bring a solution to the problem, for it lets you set any speed from 16-120 rpm (with digital [? - Ed.] control).

I hope to have been of any help.

Sincerely,

Armand Mangin  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] OSTEND.  
BELGIUM.

## Melody Cards (continued, 1)

Further to our letter in "Hillandale News" no.219, and Frank Andrews' request for extending the series, here are details of all that we have -

- MC.100 Birthday wishes "Rock-a-boogie birthday rock"
- MC.101 Birthday wishes "The washboard birthday special"
- MC.102 Many happy returns "A very happy birthday"
- MC.103 Happy birthday "Happy, happy birthday"
- MC.104 Happy birthday "Many happy returns of the day"
- MC.105 Birthday greetings "God bless you! (and many happy returns)"
- MC.106 A birthday greeting "In the land of birthday toys"
- MC.107 Many happy returns "May your party be hot!"
- MC.108 Happy birthday "The coffee bar cha cha"
- MC.110 Birthday wishes "I think of you"



## Letters

MC.111 Birthday greetings "Little perky poodles"

MX.10 Merry Christmas "Good King Wenceslas"

MX.12 Christmas greetings "Tavern in the town"

MX.17 Merry Christmas "Riding home for Christmas"

MX.18 Merry Christmas "Under the mistletoe"

MX.20 Christmas greetings "Once in royal David's city"

Details of MC.109, MX.11, 13-16, and 19 not known.

All these gatefold cards are 7" square with multicoloured fronts, with 6" diameter clear plastic discs stuck over the fronts. All cards have different fronts.

Also from the same company, Melody Cards, came a series of postcards, 8" long by 6 and a quarter inches deep, again with multi-coloured pictures and the clear plastic record stuck over. The records vary in diameter but are approximately 5 and three-quarter inches. They carry no reference numbers but we have -

To wish you every happiness "Postmans rock"

Wishing you joy & happiness "The coffee bar cha cha" (see MC.108 above); without any greeting "Washboard birthday special" (see MC.101 above).

This now raises the questions - Was "Postmans

rock" on MC.109? Were all the birthday cards also reproduced as postcards, or vice versa? We are,

Yours sincerely,

Eddie & Elaine Shaw



LONDON, EC1Y 8NQ.

### Melody Cards (continued, 2)

Further to our letter [see above - Ed.] regarding "Melody Cards", herewith details of a further two of the Christmas series -

MX.15 Christmas greetings "Let's have an old-fashioned Christmas"

MX.16 Happy Christmas "It's Christmas again".

This now only leaves gaps of MC.109, MX.11, 13, 14, & 19.

Yours sincerely,

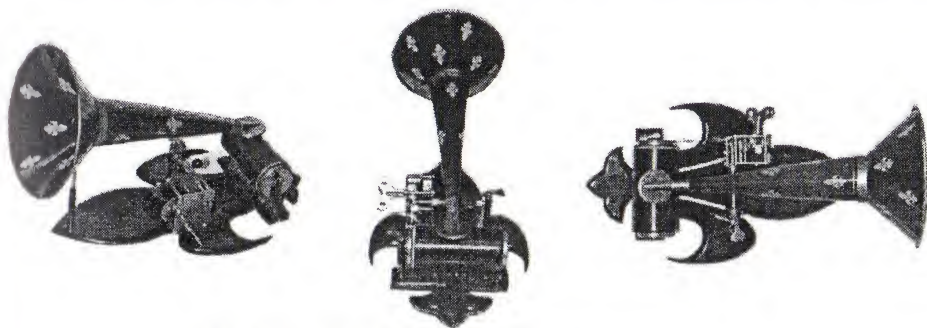
Eddie & Elaine Shaw, 



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*Information from Richard Taylor, of Newport, Shropshire indicates that the "missing" MX.14 is Happy Christmas "Rock a Cock Robin", and the MX.19 is Happy Christmas "Christmastime" - Ed.*

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